

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and
restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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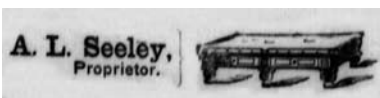
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The Strangers' Guide

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The California State Library archives the Cosmopolitan Hotel Register from Albert L. Seeley's hotel in Old Town San Diego. The register begins with April 21, 1870—about seven months after the hotel actually opened. Some pages are missing, some entries are incomplete, and some years have very few listings. The bulk of the entries are from 1870-1873, with only a few for 1874 and 1875. There are two pages that appear to be 1887. The register was obviously not used all the time, even though guests were staying there. In later years Seeley family members used the book for note taking or doodling.



The hotel register pages were set up so that the right hand page was imprinted "COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL, A.L. SEELEY, Proprietor, 187_" with handwritten dates, names, residence, room number, and some notations on payment. Unfortunately for historians, much of this information was

left incomplete. All the right hand pages are titled the same way, except for one in which Seeley's name has been crossed out and "J.P. Hill" written above. This is for the date July 30, 1873. According to the *San Diego Union* of June 29, Mr. Hill rented the Seeley House for two years, beginning July 1, 1873. However, Hill only ran the hotel for a period of about five months. The *San Diego Union* (December 7, 1873) announced that, "Mr. J. P. Hill left us last week. Mr. A.L. Seeley has resumed the management of the Cosmopolitan Hotel." During this time Seeley ran on the Republican ticket for county supervisor at large. In the September election, he lost by 124 votes. Perhaps he decided that running a hotel and a stage were better occupations than that of politician.

Interestingly, the left hand pages of the hotel register were set up with a printed list of the "Strangers' Guide to Leading Business Houses in San Diego." The list of 26 businesses included Seeley's Cosmopolitan Hotel and two competitors—Alonzo Horton's Horton House and S.S. Gordon's New San Diego Hotel. There was also a listing for North & Knight's Opposition Stage Line, which ran between Old and New San Diego. Other listings for San Diego included a photographer, dentist, druggists,

hardware, wines, real estate, grocers, livery, and forwarding agents. Most of the businesses were not based in Old Town. Listed for both Old and New San Diego was J.S. Mannasse & Co., with a large assortment of general merchandise.

Seeley's own advertisement for the Cosmopolitan Hotel showed a billiard table with the description, "This Hotel is Large, Commodious and First Class in all the appointments. The Furniture is new and of the best quality. The table is always supplied with the Rarest Delicacies. The Bar stocked with Choice Wines, Liquors and Cigars, and elegantly appointed Billiard Rooms always at the service of Guests. The Stages for Anaheim, Los Angeles and San Francisco leave this Hotel three times a week."

Studying the entries in the Cosmopolitan Register, the reader notices visitors from San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Memphis, Akron, Providence, Bangor, St. Louis, and even Norway. But most of the guests are locals from National City, Julian, Escondido, Temecula, San Pasqual, San Luis Rey, Peñasquitos, and New San Diego. The hotel apparently accommodated the locals even more than the strangers and was popular with many of the earliest county residents.

